

# NEWS RELEASE

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## United Way Fox Cities

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### **United Way to kickoff annual fundraising campaign with a goal of \$8.3 million**

(Appleton) United Way Fox Cities' supporters gathered on the grounds of SECURA Insurance Companies on Wednesday, August 26 to officially mark the beginning of the 2015 United Way community campaign. A goal of \$8.3 million dollars has been established for the campaign. Campaign Co Chairs, Tom Riordan president and CEO, Neenah Enterprises, and Mike Weller, COO of Faith Technologies will lead the campaign.

Keynote speaker for the event, Joe Mauthe, executive director of the Housing Partnership provided an overview of Project RUSH – a comprehensive research project led by the Fox Cities Housing Coalition to better understand the many facets of homelessness in our community. Mauthe stated, “The issue of homelessness continues to rise in our community. In order to address this complex issue, we need to better understand the factors that lead to homelessness. This includes everything from personal factors such as education and physical and mental health to community issues such as employment opportunities and the availability of affordable housing. Now that this data is becoming available, the Fox Cities Housing Coalition is beginning a strategic planning process to ensure that we can effectively and efficiently address the issue. United Way Fox Cities was instrumental in initiating this project, and will continue to be an important player in the solution – it’s what the United Way does best: understand complex community issues and develop meaningful, sustainable, broad-based solutions.”

Dean Gruner, president and CEO of ThedaCare serves as the United Way Leadership Giving Chair. Dr. Gruner compared the work of United Way to the field of medicine, “United Way functions like a generalist – they take a high level overview of the community’s health. We know we need not only the specialists but also the resources to make us stronger and healthier. Improving the health of our

community is hard work. Solving complex issues – like homelessness – takes everyone coming together to create the solution. United Way does that in the Fox Cities.”

This will be the second year that Riordan will be at the helm of the campaign, and his experience has shown him that when people understand the mission of United Way support follows. “Once people -- whether they are employees, business leaders, young or old, long term residents or newer to the area like myself -- find out what the real "mission" of United Way is and the great work and successes the partner agencies are making, it's pretty easy to get them to support the cause with time, talent, and financial support. Who can possibly be against strengthening families, improving self-sufficiency, developing children, or improving health? My job as Co-Chair is simply to help tell the story -- the rest takes care of itself.”

Mike Weller, COO of Faith Technologies, is also leading the campaign for a second time. Weller’s previous time as chair of the campaign was in 2005, a year that saw the country reeling from the effects of Hurricane Katrina. Weller was inspired by a visit he made to Harbor House, a United Way partner agency. “I saw a mother with her four children very happy that they had a safe place to go—that made a difference to me. The goal of United Way is not about raising funds but to make a difference through the programs that help people. My goal is to ensure that every person who needs a helping hand receives the help they need.”

Riordan adds, “I would hope that we can continue to build on past successful campaigns and accelerate the trend of increasing participation by adding thousands more people that join us to donate their time and financial support. As I have learned during my time here, the Fox Cities is a wonderful area to raise a family -- no new news there. But if you look closely, we have a lot of families and people that are quietly struggling. United Way impacts one of every three people here. The work of United Way is to focus on key areas that will literally change people's lives.”

End

United Way works every day to improve lives and create lasting change in our community. Through community-wide studies we’ve identified key issues and areas of focus. We gather partners from across the community to create solutions that address those issues. Our work is thoughtful, collaborative and measurable. We invite you to join us and LIVE United.